

PEOPLE & THINGS By ATTICUS

HAVING spent Friday afternoon at Wimbledon I find the thought impressed upon me that this annual function is the British equivalent of the Spanish bull ring.

With a nice sense of showmanship the British players are out in at the beginning to rouse the sadistic instincts of the crowd, and there is much applause if our home-bred performers survive the preliminaries, even though they face the certainty of slaughter at a later stage in the proceedings.

So morose have our newspaper commentators become that even when Becker of Britain and Howe of Australia fought gloriously against Mulloy and Patty of America in the men's doubles, they made scarcely a mention of it.

You may remember that Sir Norman Brookes encouraged me to take the view that Ashley Cooper was, the best singles player in the world, and that he would triumph over young Mr. Hoad. Unhappily for Atticus's reputation as a prophet, Hoad was in such superb form that no man in the world could have beaten him on Friday. He played with such force and magic that at the end his face actually broke into a smile.

However, I predict that Cooper will be the Wimbledon champion next year. At any rate I cannot be proved wrong for twelve months.

The Missing 'Great'

AND now for a slightly sour note. Is it a fact that in competitive lawn tennis the cult of efficiency is destroying personality? Who is there to equal Susanne Lenglen, who turned the tennis court into a royal court over which she reigned supreme? Then there was Borotra, with his mock horror when he missed a shot, his humorous despair and his gay delight... I know, that the cult of personality is not in favour these days, but another Borotra would be a welcome change in this efficiency-plus period.

Wrath of Youth

ACCORDING to the publisher, we are shortly to have a book which will be a symposium

by seven angry young men and one angry young woman. I do not know why there should be such a sex disparity in contemporary anger, but the purpose of the book is, apparently, "to help the public to understand what is happening whilst it is actually happening and to uncover a certain pattern that is taking shape in Britain."

The contributors can be classified into groups so that we can realise how deep is the well of wisdom from which the truth will be drawn. There are two self-confessed philosophers—Stuart Holroyd (who recently at the age of twenty-three published "Emergence from Chaos") and Collin Wilson. Then come three novelists: John Wain, Doris Lessing and Bill Hopkins. The theatre is represented by playwright John Osborne, and critics by Lindsay Anderson and Ken Tynan.

It is perhaps a weakness on my part that at the mere mention of angry young men I fly into a deep calm, but we shall give them a hearing if only to find out what has made them so angry. The right to bore should extend to Rosenkrantz and Guilderstern as well as to Polonius.

Caller Herrin'

I WISH that these young authors, philosophers and critics could have been with Sir Robert Boothby and myself in Aberdeenshire last week, where they could have watched the trawlers delivering their catch and then visited the warehouses to see young women cutting the fish into a proper pattern for packing. Here in the port were men who go to sea in all weathers, broad of shoulder and of spirit, capable of laughter and silent courage. As for the bonnie lassies—which is, I believe, the correct technical term—they would put life into any man worth the name.

The beauty of Scotland, with its mists and mountains and moonlight, is something that lingers in the senses. Even the cows in the fields have an air of philosophy about them. When eventually Sir Robert and I reached Fyvie Castle, where a great Conservative fête had been arranged, London seemed a thousand miles away; and let it be on record that so

little do the Scots care for money that the garden party raised nearly £1,800 for the Conservative cause.

Collating Colette

IN London last week for the publication of his book of reminiscences of his wife was Maurice Goudekot, the second husband of Colette.

A Dutchman by birth, who has been one of the best amateur boxers in France in his time as well as a poet, he learned his excellent English serving in the Foreign Legion and with a London Territorial regiment during the 1914-18 war. He has successfully avoided the common lot of men



M. GOUDEKET

who marry geniuses, and is very much a character in his own right.

But once married to Colette he found himself becoming her business manager, and since her death, he tells me, this work has been increasing at a phenomenal rate. Working from the famous apartment in the Palais Royal, with its Empire furniture and its collection of coloured paperweights, he is at present adapting one of her stories as a musical for Broadway and writing a film scenario from another.

Before he writes another book himself Mr. Goudekot wants to collect his wife's correspondence for publication. As Colette wrote four or five letters a day for more than fifty years this will be a huge task, but she was an unrivalled letter-writer and the twelve volumes he expects them to make will be eagerly awaited by her admirers.

Equine Masterpiece

SELEDOM in the history of newspaper publication has so small a prize drawn so many contenders. When in a moment of recklessness last Sunday I offered £5 for the best suggestion of a monument to some famous person who lived and died in the twentieth century the sluice gates were opened with a vengeance. Quite rightly the letters were nearly all enriched with sound argument, but there were some that combined humour with originality. I liked particularly Miss Vera Nicholas's letter, which I give to you in all its charm and simplicity:

I was astonished to read in your always delightful article that "there were practically no champions for the retention of the Duke of Cambridge and his horse." I hold no brief for the Duke; but surely his horse is the most magnificent horse in all London—for all I know, in the United Kingdom? Could not this equine masterpiece be allowed to remain in his present suitable place outside the War Office, but be presented with a new rider?

What about giving Lord Haig a cap (the horse would certainly unsettle any general "improperly dressed") and rescue him from the frightful beast on which he now so uncomfortably sits? Anyway, do please defend what

I have always considered the brightest and most inspiring sight in Whitehall (the horse not his rider!).

Monumental Contest

A SURPRISING number plumped for Sir Edward Elgar. On the other hand, there was strong feminine support for Mrs. Pankhurst. Another woman who had her champions was Lady Houston, who gave her energy and money to help our Air Force to be equipped in time for the Battle of Britain. Nor was Madame Curie forgotten.

Sir Thomas Beecham was also in the nominations, but I am delighted to be able to disqualify him for the happy reason that he is very much alive. Baden-Powell is not forgotten, C. B. Fry has his champions, and a reader asks for a vital and dynamic monument to Dylan Thomas, one that is shooting upwards, flowing and writhing with insistent force, swelling out to embrace life. Thundering its majesty or giggling its commonness.

Next week I shall announce the winner of the £5 note, but it is going to be a tough choice.

Reunion

MR. JOHN DIEFFENBAKER was in serious mood at the Canada Club dinner, but he made a neat excursion into humour as the microphone was moved opposite to him. "One night," he said, "Mike Pearson (his political opponent) and I were speaking at the same dinner. I had hardly begun when the chairman asked me a note which read: 'Get closer to Mike. You can understand my confusion!'"

Division of Labour

I WONDER if those of you who watched and listened to the B.B.C. televised performance of *Madam Butterfly* last Thursday evening shared my astonishment that not one of the cast was actually singing although they all appeared to be. In other words the voices were "dubbed." Thus, instead of a well-upholstered prima donna getting ready for her next bit was had an actress whose sole duty was to play the part and merely pretend to sing. As for that sentimental cad Lieutenant B. F. Pinkerton he could devote all his energies to making love and regretting the consequences without worrying about the difficult top C at the end of the Love Duet.

The combination of real acting with real singing is rarely found in the opera house. On this basis we shall be able to have a slight and wailing Isolde dying beautifully in the last act, instead of the thirteen-stone heroine to whom we have long been accustomed.

People and Words

Russia is always blamed when your British weather is freezing. Will we get any credit for the heat-wave?

—MR. JACOB MALIK, the Soviet Ambassador.

Tax avoidance is nothing new in this country—it was going on long before the Norman Conquest.

—MR. ERIC FLETCHER, M.P.

All that I know about a G-string is that I believe it is the lowest note on a violin.

—MR. JUSTICE HILBURY.

I have always regarded sherry as one of the more tiresome characteristics of middle-class society.

—MR. JULIAN SNOW, M.P.

A country's foreign policy is dictated by her geographical position. The same problem can look very different, according to whether you see it from London, or Delhi—or even Moscow.

—MR. NEWMAN.